

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From Dr M. R. Young

Dear Sir,

It is with something more than impatience that I read some of the articles in the *Entomologist's Record*, which catalogue the year's captures of rarities as if there was virtue in collecting as many entomological scalps as possible. Surely the thesis is proven that a man in possession of a motor car and several mercury vapour traps can visit the classic localities and take "good" series (*sic.*) of our rarities within one calendar year. Presumably they are now aiming to beat the track record but, alas, do not advance our knowledge one jot. As Ford (1955, *Moths*, p. 127) says "the tendency to go to some locality celebrated for rare insects merely to find them is pernicious if we gain no fresh information by this means".

I can imagine nothing more horrifying (or less excusable) than visiting a famous site to add my light to those of other collectors (can we call them entomologists?); no wonder we have a dubious reputation as conservationists.

I am fully alive to the value of visiting a known locality to study the habitat of a species so as to search for it more effectively elsewhere; and yes, I admit to taking a few specimens of rarities when I come across them, so as to have representative voucher specimens, but I would be ashamed to admit to some of the "triumphs" of collecting prowess reported in our journals. If we all applied the same zeal to investigating new areas, breeding puzzling species or studying particular areas in depth that some collectors apply to their frantic rush to (say) Dungeness or the New Forest, then we would be doing the moths and ourselves much better service. — M. R. YOUNG, Department of Zoology, University of Aberdeen, Tillydrone Avenue, Aberdeen, AB9 2TN. [We much appreciate our correspondent's point of view and would be interested to hear from other readers on this subject. — Editor]

Notes and Observations

CNAEMIDOPHORUS RHODODACTYLA (D. & S.) IN WEST SUSSEX. — On 26th July, 1975 the m.v. light was being operated in some woodland in West Sussex. There was a low turnout of highly predictable moth species except for one exciting arrival, a male *C. rhododactyla* (D. & S.). This appears to represent an extension of its old range as given by both Meyrick and Beirne. The latter states that it is probably extinct except in single localities in Kent, Essex and Huntingdon, while it had been recorded from Middlesex, Surrey and Hertfordshire. I know that it was to be found still in more than one place in Essex a few years ago, but have no knowledge of the other counties. I shall be interested to investigate the extent of the colony by searching for larvae in 1976. — R. FAIRCLOUGH, Blencathra, Deanoak Lane, Leigh, Surrey.